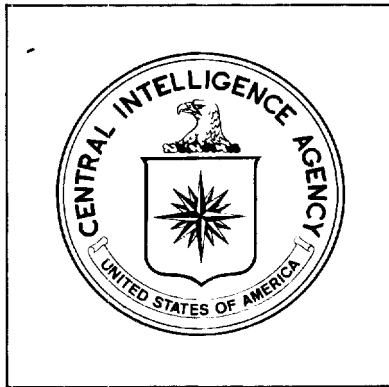


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March 18, 1975
SC No. 00392/75

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Brezhnev Speaks on Soviet Foreign Policy

Soviet party chief Brezhnev, speaking in Budapest yesterday, presented a sober but positive reiteration of Soviet foreign policy positions. Brezhnev said the USSR was giving "most serious attention" to consolidating relations with the US, but otherwise said relatively little about bilateral matters. He made no mention of President Ford or of Brezhnev's forthcoming trip to the US.

Brezhnev devoted considerable attention to European matters--which is no surprise given the venue of the speech. He referred to progress at CSCE and the prospect of a "summit level" windup in the coming months, but did not mention June 30--a date he proposed for the summit finale in letters to Western leaders earlier this month. In what appeared to be an effort to play down bilateral Soviet relations, Brezhnev made no mention of developing political or economic ties with Great Britain, France, or West Germany. Brezhnev indicated that with CSCE out of the way, greater attention could be given to "military detente." He referred to the MBFR talks in Vienna and the Vladivostok agreements on strategic arms limitation. In this context he spoke of the "gradual reduction," as well as limitation, of armed forces and armaments. He said, however, that this is not a matter that could be decided "overnight."

For his East European audience, Brezhnev had a few pointed reminders of the past, when the "unity of our parties" rebuffed right-wing and leftist "distortions." He had high praise for his host, Hungarian party chief Kadar. He also referred positively to the contribution of the Warsaw Pact and CEMA, particularly in enabling the East to do a better job than the West in promoting economic growth

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and stability at a time of worldwide economic trouble. At the same time, he admitted that the East Europeans and the Soviets would have to coordinate their economic planning more effectively to meet the problems raised by higher prices for energy.

On the "crisis of capitalism," Brezhnev picked up the defensive theme of some of his ideologues that the West's economic woes strengthened the hand of reactionary elements, and hence was a source of potential trouble for the USSR. In terms reminiscent of his victory-through-contacts speech in 1973, he gave a nod to the importance of stepping up the ideological struggle around the globe.

Brezhnev hewed close to the standard Soviet line on the Middle East. He made no reference to Secretary Kissinger's current round of negotiations. He referred to the importance of resuming negotiations in Geneva, satisfying the rights of the Palestinians--including the creation of their own "state entity"--and ensuring the existence of "all" (i.e., Israel, as well as the Arab nations) states in the Middle East.

Brezhnev did not mention China directly, and made only passing reference to the problems in Asia.

Brezhnev seemed in good health. US observers thought his appearance had not changed from mid-February, when he spoke during Prime Minister Wilson's visit to Moscow. (CONFIDENTIAL)


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Prague Reacts to Smrkovsky Memoirs

The Czechoslovak regime broke its three-week silence on the embarrassing *Smrkovsky Memoirs* last Friday with a vituperative attack on their reported author and the left-wing Italian magazine that first published them. The party daily *Rude Pravo* labeled the *Memoirs* "anti-Communist slander, based on half-truths, inventions, and lies," but appeared to acknowledge their authenticity.

The *Memoirs*, which are reported to be the death-bed testimony of Josef Smrkovsky who was second only to Dubcek among the 1968 reformers, provide an eyewitness account of the August 1968 Soviet invasion, the arrest and detention of top Czechoslovak leaders, and their subsequent negotiations with Soviet leaders. The *Memoirs* thus highlight the treacherous activities of hard liners who now hold top positions within the leadership--Bilak, Indra, Hoffman, and Jakes. The *Memoirs* also tarnish the heretofore heroic role of President Svoboda in the negotiations with the Soviets.

Smrkovsky reportedly requested that his testimony be published in the left-wing Italian periodical, *Giorni-vie Nouve* one year after his death--which came in January 1974. Italian leftists have been the most sympathetic supporters of the 1968 reform and have sharply criticized the Czechoslovak regime's treatment of the ostracized reformers. Prague's denunciation of *Giorni-vie Nouve* and its editor, Davide Lajolo--a member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party--for "attempting to harm socialism by serving its enemies" will probably further exacerbate the severely strained relations between the two parties. Curiously, the Czechoslovaks chose not to surface their attack until the eve of the Italian party congress, which opened on Tuesday.

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In addition to the invective against Smrkovsky, the continued sensitivity of the regime to the 1968 events was demonstrated by another recent development--the *mea culpa* of the chief editor of a party theoretical weekly. In the February 26 issue of *Tvorba*, chief editor Jiri Hajek admitted that he had made a "serious political mistake" when he published a short story by his son that discussed in an unusually sympathetic manner the persecution of people ostracized for their activity in 1968. The younger Hajek's article was viewed by some observers as a trial balloon for better treatment of the reformers. If that was the case, the hard liners promptly deflated it. (CONFIDENTIAL)


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